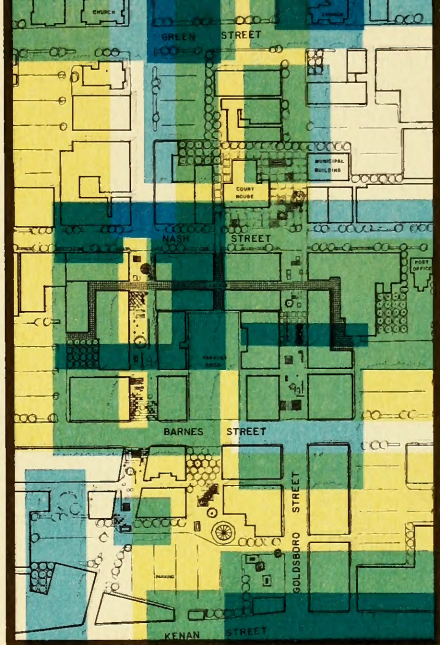


C4

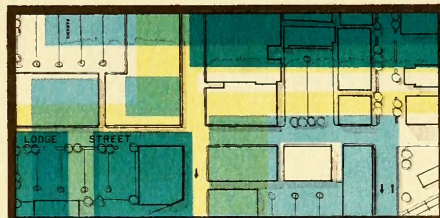
11:W7/4


North Carolina State Library
Raleigh

N.C.
Doc.



CENTRAL AREA PROPOSAL WILSON, NORTH CAROLINA





Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2010 with funding from
State Library of North Carolina

<http://www.archive.org/details/centralareapropo00norl>

CENTRAL AREA PROPOSAL

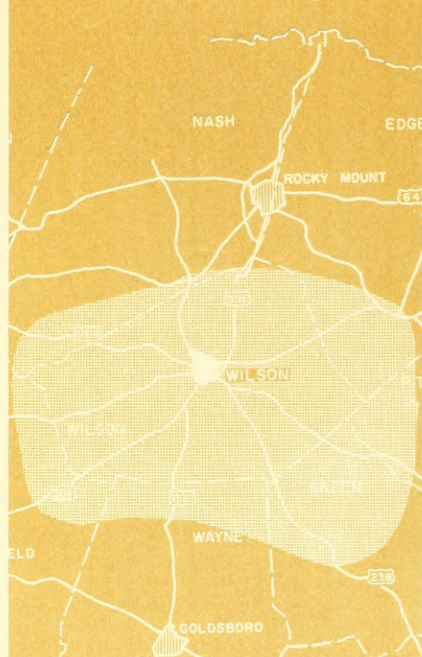
WILSON, NORTH CAROLINA

A PRELIMINARY STUDY

DCP

The preparation of this report was financed in part through an urban planning grant from the Housing and Home Finance Agency, under the provisions of section 701 of the Housing Act of 1954, as amended.

| | | | <u>Page</u> |
|------------------------------|-----|-----|-------------|
| INTRODUCTION | ... | ... | 1 |
| EXISTING SITUATION: ANALYSIS | | | |
| Population | ... | ... | 5 |
| Employment | ... | ... | 10 |
| Commercial | ... | ... | 10 |
| EXISTING SITUATION: SURVEY | | | |
| Land Use | ... | ... | 14 |
| Physical Decay | ... | ... | 19 |
| Traffic Congestion | ... | ... | 19 |
| Parking Facilities | ... | ... | 21 |
| Declining Sales | ... | ... | 25 |
| Floor Space Analysis | ... | ... | 25 |
| CENTRAL AREA PROPOSAL | | | |
| Design Philosophy | ... | ... | 29 |
| Goals | ... | ... | 30 |
| Plan | ... | ... | 31 |
| IMPLEMENTATION | ... | ... | 39 |
| ILLUSTRATION | | | |
| Planning Districts | ... | ... | 2 |
| Trade Area | ... | ... | 6 |
| Land Use, 1960 | ... | ... | 15 |
| Average Daily Traffic, 1960 | ... | ... | 20 |
| Off Street Parking, 1960 | ... | ... | 22 |
| On Street Parking, 1960 | ... | ... | 23 |
| Retail Sales, | ... | ... | 24 |
| Thoroughfare Plan | ... | ... | 32 |
| Proposed Central Area Plan | ... | ... | 36 |
| Sketches | ... | ... | 37 |



INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

The City of Wilson is located on the gently rolling coastal plain regions of the eastern North Carolina. Situated slightly beyond the eastern end of the industrial Piedmont Crescent, a broad sweeping curve which stretches across the central part of the State, Wilson lies in the heart of the fertile bright-leaf tobacco belt. The economy of Wilson has been centered around agriculture since the area was first settled. The City is the largest bright-leaf tobacco market in the world with several auction warehouses and redrying plants. This gave Wilson its prominence as a retail center, during the early part of its existence. The first industry was established in the Town in 1854 when Hackney Brothers began manufacturing buggies. The first tobacco was sold in Wilson on September 7, 1890. In 1877 there were only 17 acres of tobacco in the County. In 1958 there were 16,300 acres.

The City of Wilson was established in 1849, six years before Wilson County was formed. Two villages along the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad, Toisnot Depot and Hickory Grove, were incorporated on January 29, 1849, as Wilson Town. The first Town Limits were one-fourth mile each way from the B. and N. Woods Confectionary on the corner of Nash and Tarboro Streets.

The City enjoys a central location surrounded by a galaxie of coastal plain cities, Rocky Mount, Greenville, Kinston, Goldsboro, all of which are more or less, of similar magnitude. The Atlantic Coast Line and Norfolk-Southern Railroads serve the region. The Southern Railroad links the City with Raleigh, the Capitol of North Carolina, located forty-five miles west of the City and Norfolk, the Atlantic seaport, 150 miles to the northeast.

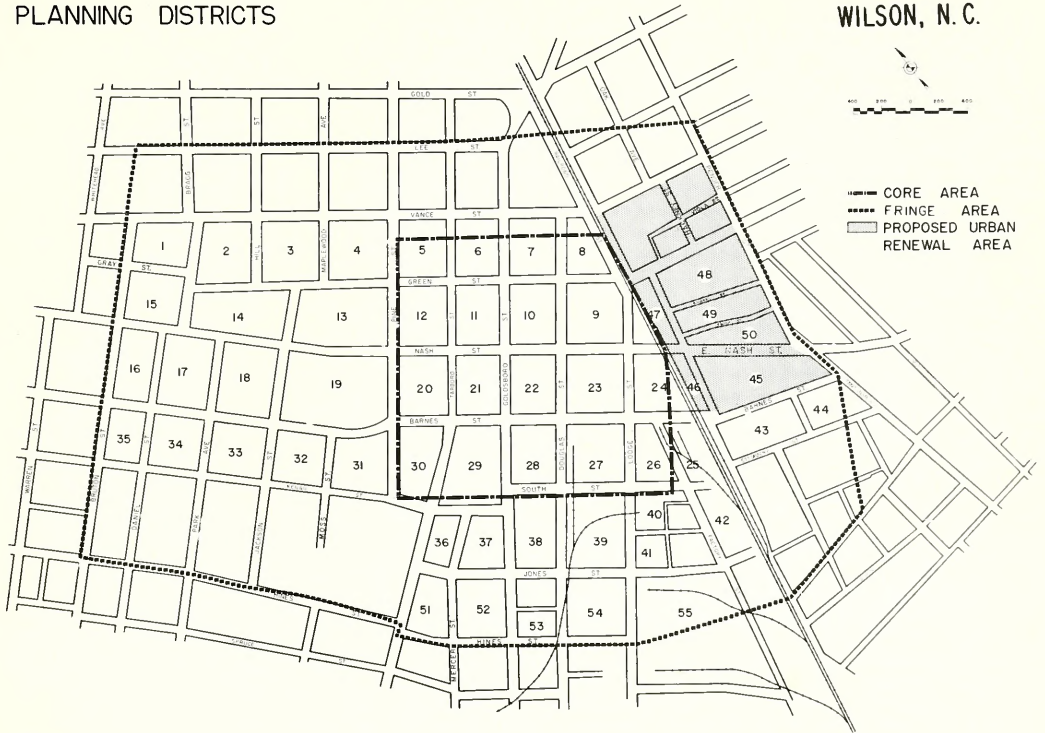
The retail trade area of Wilson generally conforms to the Wilson County. The retail center of this area is the central business district of the City of Wilson. The central business district occupies approximately 172 acres and is delineated by Bruton Street in the west, Hines Street in the south, Pender Street in the east and Lee Street in the north.

PLANNING DISTRICTS

WILSON, N. C.



- CORE AREA
- - - FRINGE AREA
- ▨ PROPOSED URBAN RENEWAL AREA



The commercial "core" of this area constitutes twelve city blocks bounded by Pine Street in the west, Kenan and South Streets in the south, Green Street in the north and the railroad tracks in the east.

The central area of a city is the place where a city had its beginning. It is also the basis of a city's existence both economically and physically. In a recent article, one North Carolina planner observed that the assessed valuation per acre in the central areas of cities is one thousand times the same figure for the rural areas. From an economic standpoint, therefore, preservation and development of central areas are essential. Physically, the central areas provide a focal point to the entire community and as such integrates and holds together a city as a unified complex. If the central area of a city is allowed to be diffused, the city itself might disintegrate.

In most of the smaller communities this diffusion has tended to take place along the main thoroughfares. Wilson has so far, been lucky to be able to maintain a fairly compact "core" area and avoid unnecessary diffusion along the main thoroughfare. The recent developments, however, show a tendency toward this type of development along west Nash Street. Also, the central area of Wilson, like most other cities in the nation is confronted with various problems. These include: inadequate parking facilities, incompatible land uses, obsolescence of structures due to age and in general unattractive surroundings.

Realizing the importance of revitalizing the City's central area, the Planning Board of Wilson together with the North Carolina Department of Conservation and Development, Division of Community Planning and with federal financial assistance, developed this proposal.

At the onset it must be stressed that the purpose of this report is to provide a framework for further studies. This should be followed with more detailed studies on market analysis, economic feasibility studies, physical design studies, etc., in future. This proposal, therefore, should never be considered as the final solutions to the problems of Wilson's central area. This is a very complex

and difficult job, but a thriving and dynamic central area is essential to the economic well being of the entire community of Wilson.

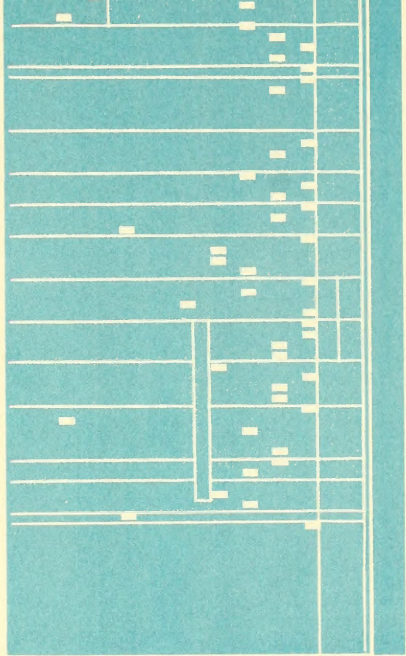
In the design proposal particular attention has been given toward utilizing the existing layout of streets and to the delineation of existing buildings. The approach taken has been to project Wilson's growth for a period of twenty years in order to anticipate space needs for Wilson in the year 1980.

The following are the basic recommendations. The plan has been treated in more detail in the subsequent pages.

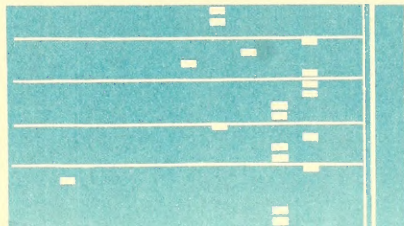
(1) Concentration of retail activities into a compact and a well-defined area bound by Pine Street, Douglas Street, Nash Street and Barnes Street. The super-block thus formed would contain two open air pedestrian malls which will be connected with a shopping arcade. The super-block includes three suitably located parking areas, including a parking deck to cater for the parking needs of this center.

(2) Creation of a public square, in order to effect a dignified setting for the public buildings as well as to provide a focal point for the entire community. This complex would then form a civic administration center.

(3) In order to improve accessibility to the central area the plan proposes the effectuation of a oneway street system, the construction of an overpass on Nash Street over the railway intersection and the creation of a series of off-street parking areas in the peripheral regions of the core area.



EXISTING SITUATION: ANALYSIS

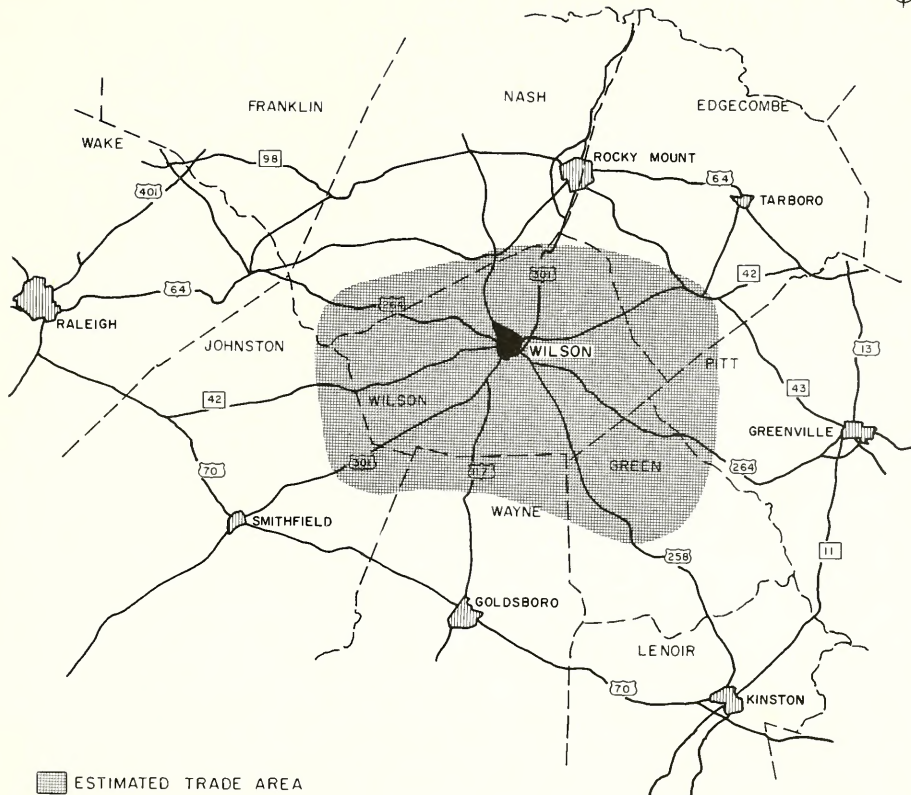


The central area of a city serves the entire region surrounding it. It's trade area, therefore, extends beyond the confines of a city's political limits. The City of Wilson is surrounded by a group of cities, most of which, including Wilson, function as a retail and governmental center for their respective counties. The entire region in turn comes under the influence of the trade area of Raleigh, situated on the western end of the complex, for more specialized products.

The trade area population of most of these cities conforms generally to the county lines. This is especially true in the case of Wilson which is surrounded by Raleigh, Goldsboro, Kinston, Greenville and Rocky Mount. A generally accepted method for the delineation of a retail trade area for cities of less than 50,000 population has been the application of "W. J. Reilly's law of retail gravitation", which states in general terms that the attraction of a retail business center on any one segment of population is directly proportional to the relative size of that center and inversely proportional to the distance from the center. The resulting trade area in the case of Wilson, from the application of this law, generally conforms to the County line with parts of it extending beyond, in the east side, into parts of Green and Pitt Counties. The area includes the community of Elm City, Stantonsburg, Lucama, Black Creek, Saratoga and extends up to Farmville in the east. The area contains eleven communities in all with an approximate population of 17,200 and the total population including Wilson is approximately 75,000.

The map of Wilson's trade area as delineated by Reilly's law of retail gravitation for 1940, 1950 and 1960, shows that there has been a very gradual contraction on the eastern, southern and western sides. The northern side registers slight gain. The reasons are fairly evident. Growth and development of Raleigh's trade area affects the western side. Goldsboro and Kinston are showing a faster rate of development and accounts for the contraction on the southern side. This probably stems from their locational advantage of being on highway 70 which extends from the Piedmont Crescent to New Bern and Morehead City on the Atlantic shore.

WILSON, N.C.



ONE INCH = APPROXIMATELY TEN MILES

Greenville, on the east, is sufficiently far from Raleigh to extend its influence as a retail center. Rocky Mount, in the north of Wilson, on the otherhand, not having any of these advantages, lost some of its trade area to Wilson. These observations become more evident from the fact that Goldsboro, Kinston and Greenville have registered a higher rate of growth over the past few decades.

PERCENT CHANGE IN POPULATION IN FIVE COASTAL PLAIN CITIES,
BY DECADES, FROM 1900 THROUGH 1960

| City | Percent Increase during the decade ending in: | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|-------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | 1900 | 1910 | 1920 | 1930 | 1940 | 1950 | 1960 |
| Wilson | 65.8 | 90.6 | 58.0 | 18.9 | 52.5 | 19.6 | 25.0 |
| Rocky Mount | 259.9 | 174.1 | 58.3 | 68.0 | 19.4 | 8.3 | 16.1 |
| Goldsboro | 46.3 | 3.9 | 85.0 | 32.7 | 15.3 | 24.2 | 34.6 |
| Kinston | 137.9 | 70.4 | 39.7 | 16.3 | 35.4 | 19.2 | 35.4 |
| Greenville | 32.4 | 59.9 | 40.7 | 53.3 | 37.9 | 32.0 | 36.7 |

Source: U. S. Bureau of Census, 1960.

During the first half of the twentieth century, the population of Wilson increased by 553 percent. Over the same period of time the population of the State of North Carolina increased by 115 percent. It is significant to note that highest population growth occurred during the decade immediately following the depression. This is the period when agricultural activities were receiving prominence in the entire nation. During the two following decades, Wilson's population growth has been slow. The growth, however, has been steady and faster than both the County and the State Economic Area Number 8. (Economic Areas are homogeneous areas having similar characteristics. These have been delineated in a study encompassing the whole nation by Donald J. Bogue and Calvin L. Beale. The purpose of this study was to facilitate further study of these areas. North Carolina State Economic Area 8 consists of Edgecombe, Green, Lenoir, Nash, Pitt, Wayne and Wilson Counties). In fact, the population of the area surrounding the City of Wilson registered a decline and the area is still in the process of losing population. The absolute increase in Wilson's population has been from 12,613 in 1930 to 28,753 in 1960.

FUTURE FORECAST

It is estimated that the population of Wilson will grow from 28,753 in 1960 to approximately 35,000 in 1980. This would be an absolute growth of 6,000 over the period. During the same period, the population of Wilson County is estimated to gain 3,500, or from 1960 population of 57,716 to 1980 population of 61,033.

The tobacco market is expected to continue to play a major role in Wilson's growth. The diversification of industries, however, is expected to play a more important role in the future. Still, it is unlikely that there would be any major population growth in Wilson's trade area. The area is losing population and its development possibilities are restricted. The trade areas of cities of similar magnitude all around it restricts any further extensions of its boundaries. If the existing trend continues, the area will have an estimated population of 16,700 in 1980. The total population of the City of Wilson is expected to increase from 38 percent of the trade area in 1960 to approximately 59 percent in 1980. It is estimated that an aggregate of 79,366 persons will be living in Wilson's trade area in 1980. This is an absolute increase of 4,278 persons over 1960.

TREND IN POPULATION FOR WILSON CITY, COUNTY & TRADE AREA

| | 1940 | 1950 | 1960 | 1970 | 1980 |
|------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| City | 19,234 | 23,010 | 28,753 | 34,088 | 38,454 |
| County | 50,219 | 54,506 | 57,716 | 59,598 | 61,033 |
| Trade Area | 68,105 | 72,488 | 75,088 | 77,833 | 79,366 |

Source: 1940, 1950 and 1960 U. S. Bureau of the Census. Projections of 1970 and 1980 for the City of Wilson and the County of Wilson by Professor C. Horace Hamilton, Department of Rural Sociology, North Carolina State College. Trade area estimates and projections are based on Professor Hamilton's study.

EMPLOYMENT

The 1960 census records 19,596 persons employed in the industry group, in Wilson County. There has been very little change in the total number of people employed since the 1950 census was taken. However, manufacturing industry has gained with corresponding decline in agriculture sector. The retail group also registered a fair amount of increase in the total number of persons employed. Agriculture, however, still remains the biggest single employer.

| * EMPLOYMENT | - WILSON COUNTY - | | | | 1950-1960 | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| | Change | | Change | | Change | |
| <u>Industry Group</u> | <u>1950</u> | <u>Percent</u> | <u>1960</u> | <u>Percent</u> | <u>Absolute</u> | <u>Percent</u> |
| Total Employ- ment | 18881 | 34.6 | 19596 | 33.9 | +715 | + 3.7 |
| Manufacturing | 1942 | 3.5 | 3687 | 6.0 | +1545 | +79.5 |
| Retail | 2452 | 4.4 | 2937 | 5.0 | + 485 | +19.7 |
| Agriculture | 7571 | 13.8 | 4386 | 7.5 | -3185 | -42.0 |

Manufacturing is the single biggest employer within the City of Wilson. The important industries include, apparel and other textile products, textile mills, food and kindred products and furniture related industries. Retailing is the next important employer. It is expected that with a revitalized central area it will grow more important.

NUMBER OF PERSONS EMPLOYED IN RETAIL TRADE: WILSON CITY AND WILSON COUNTY - 1950-1960

| | <u>1950</u> | <u>1960</u> | Change | |
|---------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|----------------|
| | | | <u>Absolute</u> | <u>Percent</u> |
| Wilson County | 2452 | 2937 | +485 | +19.7 |
| Wilson City | 1828 | 1908 | + 80 | + 4.3 |

COMMERCIAL

As has been pointed out earlier retailing constitutes one of the major elements in Wilson's economic base. Retailing includes items such as food, general merchandise, apparel, furniture and household equipment, lumber, hardware, drugs, etc. The volume of retail sales in Wilson rose from \$8,800,000 in 1929 to \$34,075,000 in 1954, - a total increase

* Source: 1950, 1960 U.S. Bureau of the Census.

of 287 percent or approximately 11.48 percent per year. Then, from 1954 to 1958 the retail sales rose to \$34,290,000 for a total gain of only .63 percent or approximately .15 percent per year. Adjusted to constant dollar value, the sales actually registered a decline during this period. With the exception of Rocky Mount all other coastal plain cities recorded much higher increase in sales. It is difficult to pinpoint any causes for such a decline in retail sales. Some conclusions could, however, be drawn. One of the reasons may perhaps be the nation-wide mild economic recession during 1958. One other reason is the competition Wilson has to face from the neighboring coastal plain cities. The nearness of Raleigh, with much better comparison shoppers goods to offer, undoubtedly affects Wilson's retail sales adversely. These are probably some of the main reasons of Wilson comparative decline in retail sales.

GAINS IN RETAIL SALES IN WILSON AND ITS NEIGHBORING
COASTAL PLAIN CITIES

| Cities | 1948 | | | 1954 | | | 1958 | | |
|-------------|-------|--------|-------|--------|------|-------|--------|------|--|
| | Estb. | Ret. | Estb. | Ret. | % | Estb. | Ret. | % | |
| | Sales | | | Sales | | | Sales | | |
| | (000) | | | Incr. | | | (000) | | |
| Wilson | 351 | 26,228 | 378 | 34,075 | 29.9 | 343 | 34,290 | .6 | |
| Rocky Mount | 374 | 35,151 | 484 | 46,634 | 32.6 | 422 | 46,222 | -.89 | |
| Greenville | 243 | 19,810 | 325 | 29,323 | 48.0 | 268 | 31,251 | 6.5 | |
| Kinston | 267 | 23,646 | 325 | 38,643 | 63.4 | 301 | 41,127 | 6.4 | |
| Goldsboro | 315 | 28,166 | 363 | 37,763 | 34.0 | 377 | 44,109 | 16.8 | |

Source: Census of retail trade 1958, U.S. Bureau of the Census.

ESTIMATE OF EXISTING RETAIL SALES

The present retail potential in a central business district could be calculated by assuming a ratio of five square feet of gross retail area per capita. This has been found to be fairly true in most healthy and flourishing central business districts across the nation. The population of Wilson's trade area has been estimated to be 75,088. On this basis, there is an existing need of 375,440 square feet of retail space. This compares with the already existing retail space of 455,865 square feet in the core area alone. Also, the above-mentioned figure is for ground floor space only and excludes personal service type use. The total occupied space for retail type use, for both core as well as fringe area comes to 1,109,907 square feet. This indicates that at present Wilson's central area has a considerable surplus of retail space. This is substantiated by the fact that there exists a large number of small marginal type shops and a large amount of vacant space.

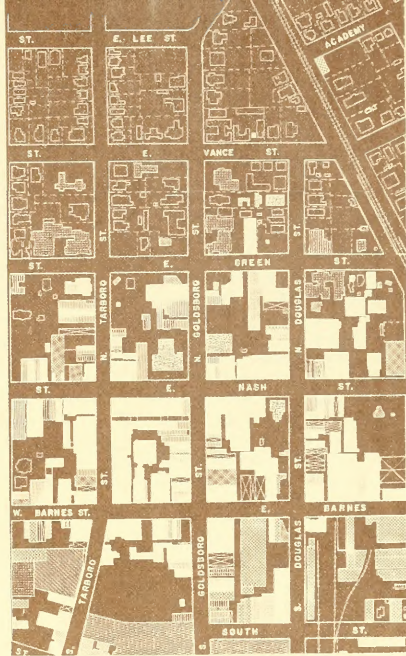
The total retail sale in North Carolina approximates \$1,002 per capita. To derive an estimate of approximate retail sales potential for the central business district of Wilson, it has been assumed that 75% of the retail sales in the trade area of Wilson comes from the central business district of Wilson. With an estimated population of 75,088 for Wilson's trade area, this comes to \$56,428,632. The Sales Management survey of buying power estimates 1960 retail sales for the City of Wilson as \$38,148,000. This leaves an estimated \$18,280,632 which now remains unrealized, which a revitalized central area may be able to draw upon. However, it must be stressed that this is somewhat of an over-estimate. The per capita retail sale is undoubtedly lower in this region as compared to other, more developed part of the State. The retail sales on the basis of estimated trade area population shows considerably lesser amount.

FUTURE ESTIMATED RETAIL SALES

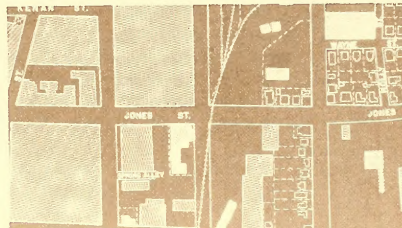
An attempt has been made here to arrive at retail sales figure for the year 1970 and 1980 on the basis of projected population. These estimates, however, do not take into account, the rising income followed with a rising expenditure on retail goods which is taking place in the entire nation. Estimates are made on the assumption that the existing shopping habits, per capita expenditure on retail goods and disposable income will remain fairly constant. The estimated retail sales of the City, based on the population growth is expected to increase from \$38,148,000 in 1960 to approximately \$40,317,000 in 1980, an increase of \$2,269,000 in a twenty year period. This is a gain of approximately 5.9 percent.

ESTIMATED RETAIL AND SERVICE SALES, CITY OF WILSON
1960-1980
(In thousands of dollars)

| | 1960 | 1970 | 1980 |
|-----------------------|--------|--------|--------|
| Food | 8,981 | 9,309 | 9,492 |
| Eating & Drinking | 1,544 | 1,600 | 1,631 |
| General merchandise | 3,249 | 3,367 | 3,434 |
| Apparel & accessories | 4,063 | 4,211 | 4,294 |
| Home furnishing | 2,098 | 2,174 | 2,217 |
| Automotive | 6,304 | 6,534 | 6,663 |
| Gasoline | 2,837 | 2,940 | 2,998 |
| Hardware | 3,218 | 3,335 | 3,407 |
| Drug | 1,167 | 1,209 | 1,233 |
| Other retail | 4,687 | 4,858 | 4,954 |
| TOTAL | 38,148 | 39,537 | 40,317 |



EXISTING SITUATION: SURVEY



Extensive use of the automobile as a means of transportation is having a great impact on the form and structure of existing central areas. The effect has been to diffuse and stretch out the activities of the core areas from the scale of a pedestrian to that of an automobile. The cities of small to medium were worst affected. The tendency of commercial development has been to trace the form of an unplanned strip development along the main streets. Wilson has so far been very fortunate in being able to avoid this type of strip development. However, in the recent past there has been an increasing trend to move westward and locate new retail type activities down West Nash Street. The reasons for this type of development becomes clear on a closer examination of the existing condition of the core area. Although vacant areas are available within the core area, they are mostly located in unattractive buildings and surroundings and could not possibly hope to compete with the more recent and better designed developments. The older and more solidly build-up core areas are also in need of parking areas.

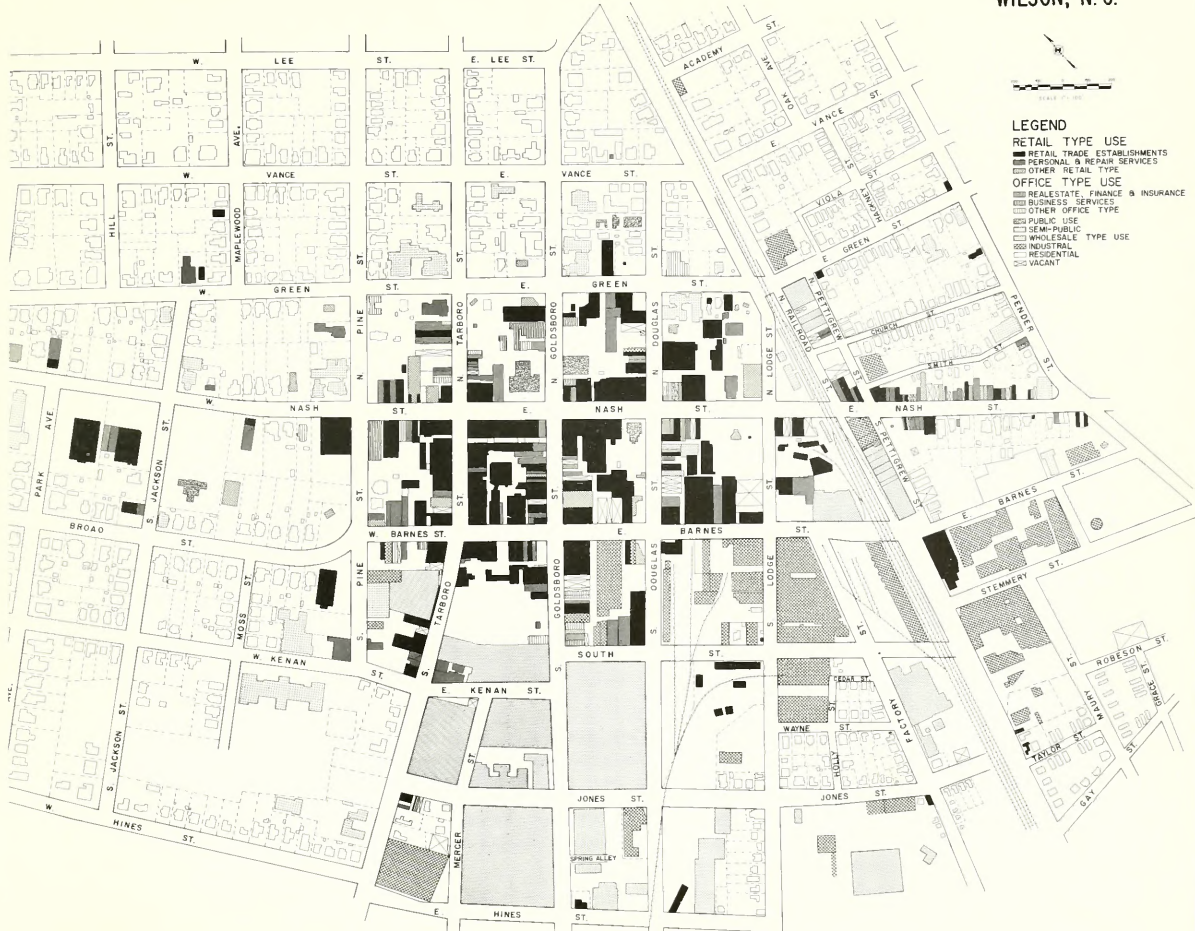
For the purpose of this study, the central area of Wilson has been divided into two districts. At the center is the "core area", which has the maximum concentration of central area type activities and the other is the "fringe", which surrounds the "core" area and has some central area type activities. The "fringe" area primarily includes residential, wholesale and industrial type of use.

Wilson central business district constitutes an area of approximately 172 acres. The area is the biggest retail center within the City's trade area and contains important chain stores and specialty shops. It also contains most of the important public buildings of the region, such as the County Court House, the Municipal Building, the Post Office and other buildings of community and religious nature.



LEGEND

- RETAIL TYPE USE**
- ▨ RETAIL TRADE ESTABLISHMENTS
 - ▨ PERSONAL & REPAIR SERVICES
 - ▨ OTHER RETAIL TYPE
- OFFICE TYPE USE**
- ▨ REAL ESTATE FINANCE & INSURANCE
 - ▨ BUSINESS SERVICES
 - ▨ OTHER OFFICE TYPE
- PUBLIC TYPE USE**
- ▨ PUBLIC USE
 - ▨ SEMI-PUBLIC
 - ▨ WHOLESALE TYPE USE
 - ▨ INDUSTRIAL
 - ▨ RESIDENTIAL
 - ▨ VACANT



In order to get a clear view of the present situation a detailed analysis of the existing land use pattern becomes necessary. For this purpose the existing land uses are divided into the following categories: Retail, Office, Public, and Quasi-Public, Wholesale, Industrial and Residential.

RETAIL USE

Retail uses are generally concentrated in the core areas of cities. This group has been divided into three sub-categories: (1) Retail trade establishments, (2) Personal and repair services, (3) Other retail types. Retail trade establishments include food stores, eating and drinking places, general merchandise stores, apparel stores, furniture stores, automotive dealers, drug stores, etc. Personal and repair services include barber shops, beauty shops, shoe repair shops, laundries, etc. Other retail types include motion picture theaters, bowling alleys, gasoline stations, etc. In the case of Wilson, the existing retail activities are fairly concentrated in the core area. A strip of personal service and amusement type retail activities are concentrated in one block just across the railroad tracks on East Nash Street. These facilities are mostly used by the Negro population and are mostly located in substandard dwellings. Recently there has been a tendency to locate new retail activities along West Nash Street beyond Pine Street.

OFFICE USE

Office type use requires a central location due to the nature of function they are expected to perform. This group has again been sub-divided into three categories, namely: (1) Finance, Real Estate and Insurance (2) Business services and (3) Other office type uses. The first of these include banks and offices, the second, accounting, auditing, bookkeeping, advertising, etc., and third include professional services, wholesale agents, non-store retailers, etc. In Wilson the existing offices are located within the core area.

Some of the offices are located on the second floors of the existing retail stores. A great percentage of the office space is located around the Court House area. Due to inadequate parking facilities in the core area, the tendency in this category has again been to locate along West Nash Street beyond Pine Street.

PUBLIC AND QUASI-PUBLIC USE

Buildings of public nature also need a central location and thereby constitute another important central area land use. Public buildings such as municipal buildings, the Court House, the Post Office, etc., together with parks and recreation areas constitute public use. Private and semi-private institutions such as churches, civic groups, terminals, etc., constitute quasi-public use. In the case of Wilson the public buildings are located in and around the core area without any particular attempts at grouping. The quasi-public type of buildings are mostly located around the fringe area.

WHOLESALE USE

This group includes all the wholesale type activities such as warehousing and storage spaces. In Wilson most of the wholesale activities are located immediately south of the core area. The core area includes, some wholesale activities, although in much lesser amount.

INDUSTRIAL USE

This type of use includes all the manufacture related activities. At present, this type of use forms a cluster on the southeast side of the core area along the railroad track. Some light industrial type activities take place in the core area. Recent trend has been to locate this type of use away from the core area.

RESIDENTIAL AREA

This type of use includes all private dwellings. These could be single-family, duplex or multi-family. Most of these types of structures are located in the fringe areas around the core blocks. The group of residential structures located just east of the core area, across the railroad track are mostly sub-standard and so are the ones located in the southeast of the core area, between the wholesale and industrial type use. Most of the residential structures located on the western and northern side of the core area are, however, in fairly good condition. Commercial growth around the core area may force some of this type of buildings out from the peripheral regions of the core area.

WILSON CENTRAL AREA
NON-RESIDENTIAL FLOOR SPACE IN CORE AND FRINGE AREAS OF WILSON'S CENTRAL
AREA BY TYPE OF USE

| Type of Land Use | Core Area | Per-Cent | Fringe Area | Per-Cent | Total | Per-Cent | Core as a % of Total |
|------------------|-----------|----------|-------------|----------|-----------|----------|----------------------|
| Retail Use | 858,048 | 43.4 | 251,859 | 17.5 | 1,109,907 | 32.5 | 77.3 |
| Office Use | 286,581 | 14.5 | 25,570 | 1.8 | 313,151 | 9.2 | 91.5 |
| Public Use | 128,388 | 6.5 | 18,260 | 1.3 | 145,648 | 4.3 | 88.1 |
| Quasi-Public Use | 33,905 | 1.7 | 210,838 | 14.6 | 244,743 | 7.1 | 13.9 |
| Wholesale Use | 161,450 | 8.2 | 657,375 | 45.6 | 818,825 | 23.9 | 46.9 |
| Industrial Use | 221,169 | 11.2 | 249,957 | 17.3 | 471,126 | 13.8 | 54.4 |
| Total occupied | 1,689,541 | 85.5 | 1,413,859 | 98.1 | 3,103,400 | 90.8 | 91.3 |
| Vacant Space | 286,655 | 14.5 | 27,459 | 1.9 | 314,114 | 9.2 | 57.8 |
| Total Space | 1,976,196 | | 1,441,318 | | 3,417,514 | | |

PHYSICAL DECAY

Like most other cities, the central area of Wilson was laid out decades ago. Meanwhile great changes have taken place in the field of transportation and communications. With the increasing use of automobiles on an obsolete street system, came congestion. Concentration of building activities and high value of land in the core area made it difficult for the merchants to provide the needed parking facilities. The buildings are becoming decayed with age as well as for lack of repairs. Faced with the problem of an unattractive central area together with a lack of parking space, the merchants and businessmen are beginning to look for fresh areas outside the core area. Fortunately it is just beginning to happen in Wilson. In many other cities this type of development has already proven to be harmful. A decision taken now will be crucial and would leave its imprint on Wilson for a long time.

One other cause of physical decay is incompatible land use. In some of the blocks, residential dwellings intermingle with commercial, industrial and wholesale uses, with the resulting detriment of each.

This decay has resulted into a generally unattractive central area. The architecture is mostly unimaginative. The streets present a dismal view with cluttered over hanging signs, billboards, telephone wires, sidewalk awnings, etc. There has been hardly any renovation of old structures and landscaping is virtually non-existent.

TRAFFIC CONGESTION

The phenomenal increase in the use of automobile, non-availability of parking spaces in the unplanned and congested central areas has made access to the core area difficult. Within the core area two different movements, that of the automobile and that of the pedestrian through the same channel, cause congestion and delay. Commensurate with this is the confusion created by the use of the same street by the service vehicles. The following map showing the average daily traffic will give some indication of the amount of traffic that converges toward the central area everyday.

WILSON N C

AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC



LEGEND



A look at the daily traffic volume map will show the amount of traffic that converge to Wilson's central area. U. S. Highway 301, which carries over 10,000 vehicles daily and Route 264 from the western side feeds into the central area. Most concentration occurs at the intersection of Nash Streets with Goldsboro and Tarboro Streets. Goldsboro and Tarboro Streets each carry over 5,000 vehicles to the center per day, with Nash Street bringing in another 7,500. So much concentration creates congestion, and it would be desirable to redirect some of this traffic around few of the core blocks to devote more areas to the pedestrians. Access to this area could be provided from suitably located parking areas.

PARKING FACILITIES

One of the major problems of accessibility to Wilson's central area is the inadequacy of the existing parking situation. The parking requirement for a commercial area is usually determined on the basis of retail floor space. Major generators of traffic are grocery shops, eating and drinking places, department stores, variety stores, etc.

At present there are 2850 parking spaces, of which approximately 1905 are in off-street parking lots. Over 750 of these are estimated to be for private parking for specific use only. The rest of the spaces are being used for general public parking. The location of the existing parking facilities are shown on the following pages. Some parking lots such as the one owned by the City, in the southside of the core area is considered by many as being a little too far away to be convenient at the present time.

Adopting an overall standard of one square foot of parking space to each square foot of retail space, there exists at the present time a shortage of 1,500 parking spaces. This is a very conservative estimate as compared to some new shopping centers which have three square feet of parking space to each square foot of retail space.

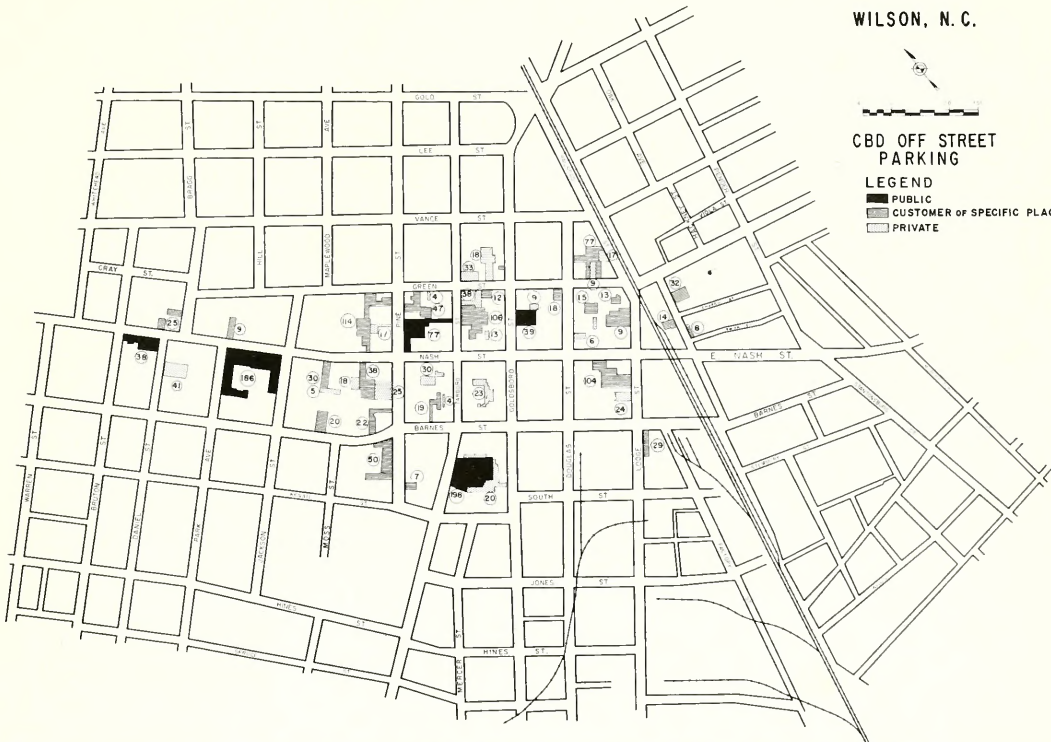
WILSON, N. C.



CBD OFF STREET
PARKING

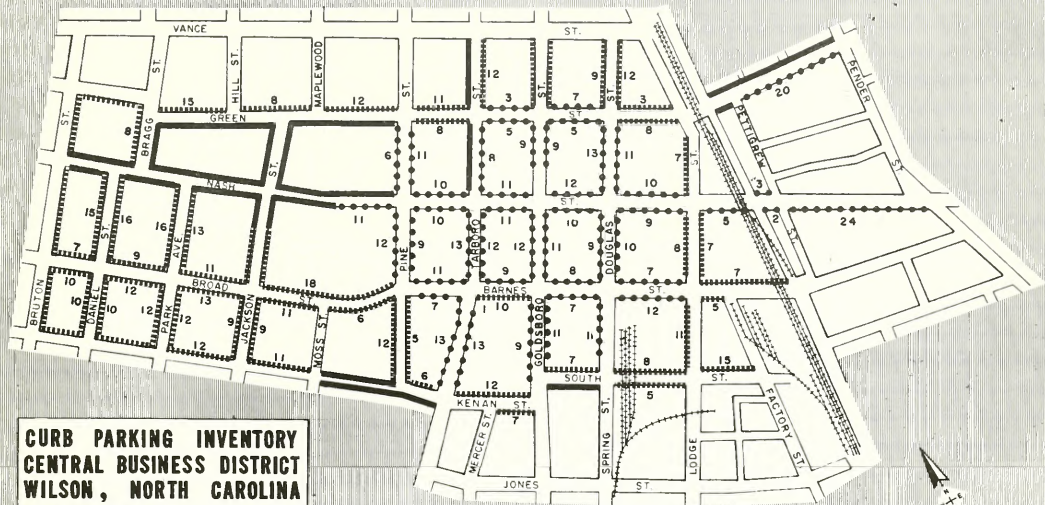
LEGEND

-  PUBLIC
-  CUSTOMER OF SPECIFIC PLACES
-  PRIVATE



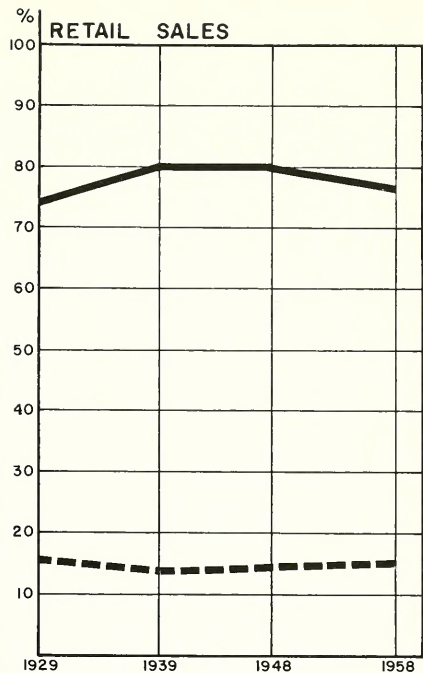
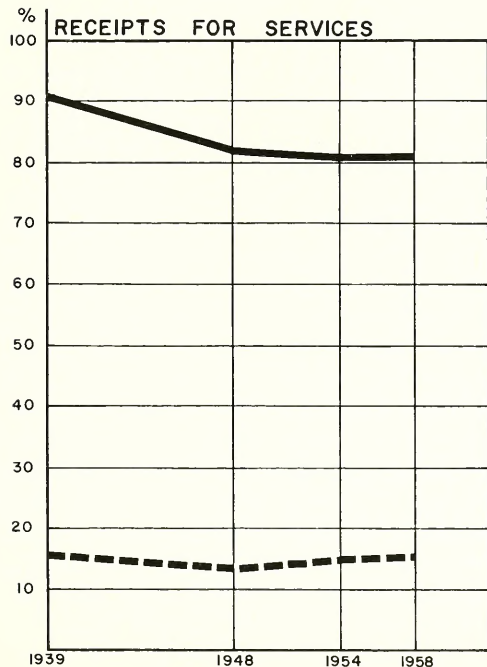
**CURB PARKING INVENTORY
CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT
WILSON, NORTH CAROLINA**

- METERED
- ▤▤▤▤▤▤▤▤▤▤ UNMETERED
- NO PARKING



CITY RETAIL SALES AS
A PERCENT OF WILSON
COUNTY AND STATE
ECONOMIC AREA NO. 8

(1929, 1939, 1948, 1954, 1958)



----- ECONOMIC AREA NO. 8
 _____ WILSON COUNTY

DECLINING SALES

The physical decay and lack of amenities are causing merchants and businessmen to invest less and less in Wilson's central area. This in turn affects the quality of goods and services. It would be evident from the preceding graphs that Wilson has failed to keep up its share of sales in Wilson County as well as in the State Economic Area Number 8. The number of retail establishments actually registered a decline and indications are that this decline is still continuing. Unless some major changes in the existing situation is effected, it is unlikely that future developers and investors would be interested in Wilson's central area.

In spite of these indications, Wilson, with its pivotal position amongst the coastal plain cities has great potential. It would take a little initiative and enterprize on the part of the people of Wilson to realize that promise. A dynamic and revitalized central area would be a step toward that direction.

FLOOR SPACE ANALYSIS

FLOOR SPACE ANALYSIS, EXISTING TREND AND FUTURE SPACE REQUIREMENTS

The aim of this report, so far, has been to present a clear picture of the existing situation. It becomes evident from the facts presented, that Wilson's central area, an essential and vitally important part of the community has been in a state of decline for sometime. It also becomes evident that usual piecemeal measures such as provisions for a few more off-street parking spaces have so far failed to effect any lasting remedy. The problems facing most central areas of today are inter-related and Wilson is no exception. The problem of accessibility is related to the problem of circulation. Both of these are in turn related to the problem of spatial arrangement of the structures. In most cases an obsolete street system has become the delineator of spatial arrangement of buildings, irrespective of the nature of their function. Attempts to solve just one part of these problems, without a comprehensive approach to the whole problem, would necessarily result in the deterioration of others.

From now on the report will aim to anticipate some of the future developments that may take place and formulate

proposals to meet these changes. An attempt has been made in this report to come up with space requirements for the year 1980. These requirements are based on the existing situation and future potential. However, the space requirements are dependent upon a number of variables, such as: population growth in the retail trade area, expendable income available to the trade area residents, shopping habits and tastes of the trade area residents, changes in the merchandizing methods, changes in the mode of transportation etc.

RETAIL SPACE

During the 1960 to 1980 period the retail trade area population of Wilson is expected to go up from 75,000 to approximately 80,000. This is a relatively small increase and it is unlikely that Wilson's central area will be hard pressed for space by 1980. The reason for continued growth of new retail activities is mainly due to the following two factors. First, although the retail trade area population is going to stay fairly stable, there is considerable redistribution of population within the trade area. The City of Wilson is gaining population from its surrounding territory. Second, the disposable per capita income of the people is going up. Based simply on the population projection, the retail sales are expected to rise from \$38,148,000 to \$40,317,000, a gain of \$2,189,000. On the basis of \$40 per square foot of retail space which is the average requirement for space in healthy central business areas around this part of the nation, the requirement for 1980 would be 54,225 square feet more. However, with a growing disposable income of the people and with a changing population distribution, the potential for development is considerably more.

OFFICE SPACE

There are at present some 313,151 square feet of office space in Wilson's central area. Here again it is unlikely that there would be need for much additional office space, since there exists a lot of vacant second floor space in the central area of Wilson, which is suitable for office space. Here, it has been assumed that roughly 10% additional office space would be needed by 1980. This would

mean that there would be a need for approximately 31,315 square feet of additional office space.

PUBLIC SPACE

There are at present 145,698 square feet of space devoted to public use. These facilities include the County Court House, Municipal Building, Post Office, etc. It is expected that additional space will be necessary in the near future for administrative purposes. The assumption here has been that there would be a need for some 11,500 square feet of additional space by 1980.

QUASI-PUBLIC SPACE

The majority of this type of use (churches, schools, libraries, utility offices etc.) are going to stay in the central area, and it is unlikely that there will be a need for much additional space for this category. The bus terminal will need some additional space by 1980 to provide additional facilities.

WHOLESALE SPACE

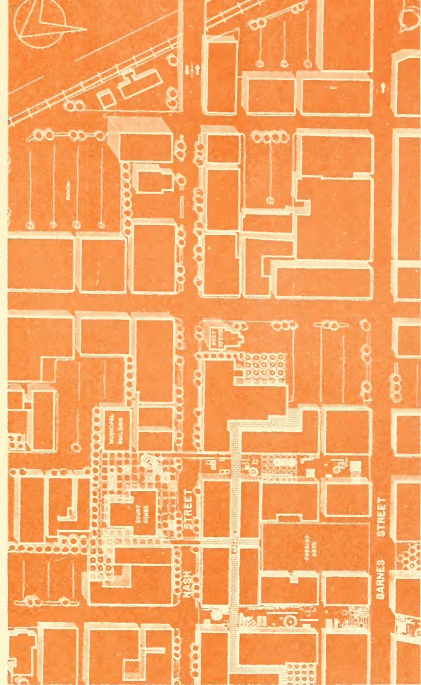
There is about 818,825 square feet of space devoted to this category. These are concentrated mostly on the southern part of the central area, immediately beyond the core area. There exists much vacant warehouses and it is unlikely that additional space would be necessary for this group.

INDUSTRIAL SPACE

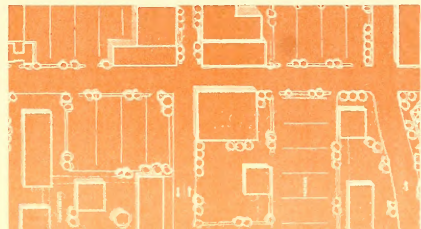
There is approximately 671,126 square feet of space occupied by industrial activities. New developments in this category are expected to occur outside the central area. The present areas devoted to this type of activity within the core area are expected to be pushed out by the expansion of retail and other central area type of activities.

SUMMARY

In 1960, there were approximately 3,417,514 square feet of space devoted to the various types of use groups previously discussed. It is estimated that an additional 139,892 square feet of building space will be necessary by 1980. Assuming an average height of two stories, 69,946 square feet of land would be required. An additional 40% of the building area ie. 27,978 square feet of space will be necessary for pedestrians, service areas, landscaping, streets right-of-way, etc.



CENTRAL AREA PROPOSAL



DESIGN PHILOSOPHY

It is evident from the foregoing presentation that the gradual decay of the central area will have to be arrested for the economic betterment of the entire community of Wilson. In order to do so some drastic yet realistic measures will have to be adopted. These measures should not only take into consideration, the changing forms and function of the central area but should be based on the anticipated changes that may occur in future.

In order to achieve such measures, the central area should be viewed as a dynamic center of the entire region. The different types of functions such as administrative, social, cultural, retail, etc., will have to be viewed in their different perspectives and properly defined.

Before any legal tools for the implementation of the plan is sought or adopted, it is necessary to have some clearly defined goals to serve as a guideline. The overall goal of such a program could be stated as the creation of a dynamic and efficient center of activities, which would serve as the social and economic center of the region and would contribute to the general economic well-being of the entire community.

These goals would provide the necessary first step toward the realization of the proposal. A central area proposal, by its very nature, requires active participation of various groups and individuals both private and public. The goals bring into focus the basic issues and help to avoid confusion arising out of matters of secondary importance. In short, they provide the guideline for future actions.

GOALS

- A central area, which would be within quick and easy reach of its entire trade area.
- An efficient traffic circulation system which would be relatively free of conflicts between pedestrians, automobile and service vehicles.
- An effective functional grouping of different type of activities so that each business is carried out as efficiently and as quickly as possible.
- Preservation of a compact central area where everything is within a pleasant walking distance.
- An improved appearance for Wilson's central area where architecture and landscape, sun and shadow, water and fountains would all play their role.

A general description: The drawings following illustrate the proposals for Wilson's central area for the year 1980. Many of the ideas expressed here are preliminary in nature and their aim is to provide a guideline for more detailed studies in the future. It must be stressed, however, that although preliminary in nature, the proposals have been prepared by keeping the basic design concepts in view. The proposals have been based on existing conditions and available statistics, but it is hoped, that they reflect more than mere statistics. It is hoped that they represent an understanding of the needs and aspirations of the people of Wilson.

The proposed plan would necessitate some amount of rebuilding and readjustment of properties. The approach taken has been realistic in the sense that existing situations and buildings have been taken into account. Anticipated need for additional floor space has either been provided on the vacant second floor areas or in the additional spaces shown in the core area.

In order to facilitate accessibility to the central area, the plan includes a oneway street-system. It is proposed that Nash and Pine Streets be kept open to two-way traffic, while Green, Vance, Barnes, Kenan, Douglas and Lodge will each handle one-way traffic. The map following explains the traffic proposal.

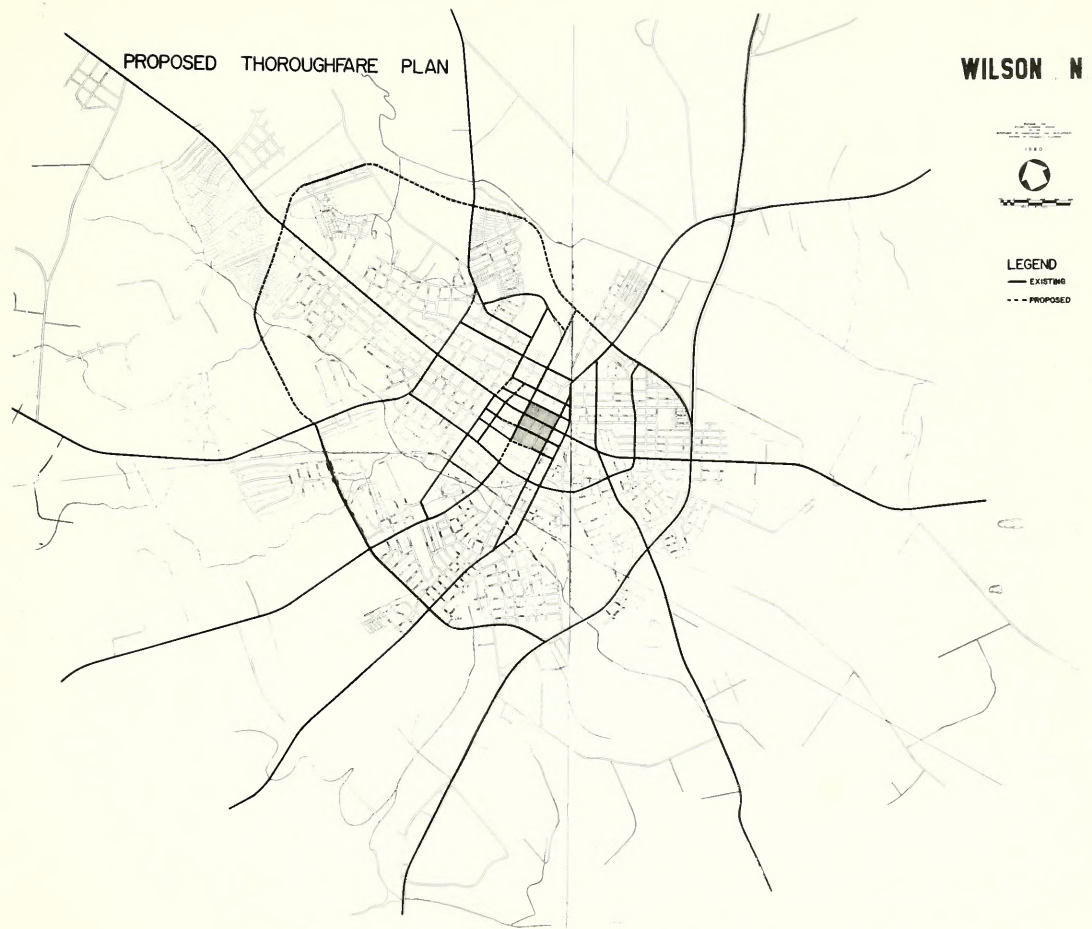
During the preparation of the design proposal for the core area, it was felt, that the Nash Street should be kept open to traffic. This was proposed due the following reasons. First, Nash Street carries the heaviest amount of traffic through the central area and closure of any part of it may seriously disrupt the efficiency of the central area. Second, this would enable passing motorists to get a view of, as well as, provide an access to the proposed public square around the County Court House and Municipal Building and to the proposed malls in Tarboro and Goldsboro Streets. The treatment of these pedestrian areas lend

PROPOSED THOROUGHFARE PLAN

WILSON N C



LEGEND
— EXISTING
- - - PROPOSED



easily to an attractive and varied type of activities and thereby act as magnets to attract people. For example, these areas may include several attractive kiosks selling newspapers, flowers, candy, tobacco goods etc. They can also be landscaped fairly easily with sculpture, display areas, fountains and pools.

The plan proposes the creation of a retail center by the effectuation of a super-block consisting of three core area blocks. The super-block is delineated by Nash Street in the north, Pine Street in the west, Barnes Street in the south and Douglas street in the east. The plan includes the creation of two malls to be effected by closing of Tarboro and Goldsboro Streets within the super-block. The super-block will also include a pedestrian arcade which will connect the existing blocks. Advantage has been taken, in this case, of the existing situation and such an arcade could be constructed without going into too much demolition. Shopping arcades such as these have proven highly successful in many other areas and it is hoped that such an unique feature will give Wilson the necessary advantage over other coastal plain cities. To make this super-block readily accessible, three parking areas have been proposed. The central one of these three will be a multi-level parking deck. The two others will be converted to multi-level ones as the need for more parking develops.

The plan also includes a proposal for the creation of a civic-administration center around the County Court House and the Municipal Building. This will be effected by the closing of Goldsboro Street between Nash and Green Streets and converting the area between the above mentioned public buildings into a public square. It is hoped that creation of these spacious and restful spaces would provide the pedestrian with ample areas to roam and shop, free from the dangers of moving vehicles.

To make the central areas more accessible from the immediate surroundings, a series of parking areas have been proposed in and around the core area. It is also proposed that all on-street parking within the core area be removed. This type of parking adds to the general congestion and

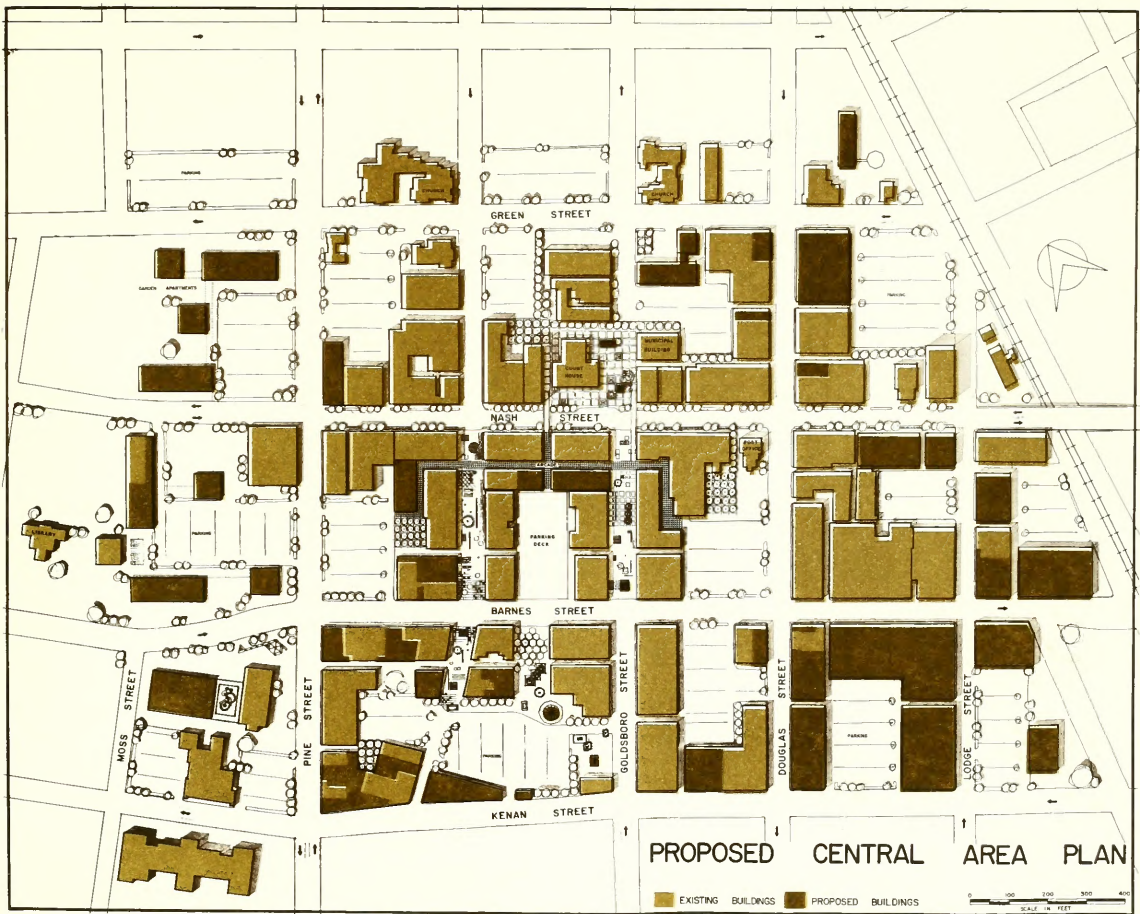
confusion within the core area, resulting from the maneuvering of parked vehicles in and out of the parking areas. This type of parking also blocks the view of display windows to the passing motorist, who may otherwise find something interesting to stop and buy.

The parking spaces have been provided on the basis of an overall ratio of 1:1 ie., one square foot of parking for each square foot of retail space. It is recommended that if a need for additional parking spaces develop in future, they should be accommodated in the two super-block parking areas, which could be converted into decks, or in the blocks immediately north of Green Street and in the blocks immediately south of South Street.

The area immediately north of the core area contains many church related buildings. This type of building should be encouraged in this area, so that they form a buffer zone between the residential area in the north and the core area. Also parking areas developed for church-related activities could be used for shopping purposes during weekdays. The area immediately west of the core area is again mainly residential. However, there are beginnings of commercial type of activities in this region. It has been observed that this type of development is detrimental both from business and consumer's viewpoint. A close-nit retail core is essential, since, this type of activity by their nature require a large clientel and comparison shopping. Also, if this type of development is allowed to continue the core area, which represents maximum investment by business and the City, will never be able to recover from a gradual decay. One other reason for such a step in the case of Wilson would be the existance of a group of fine residential buildings which are at present left to decay with the approaching commercial developments. If these buildings are restored and properly maintained they may turn into an asset to the community.

A grouping of wholesale activities exist in the area immediately south of the core area. Wholesale activity is an essential part of Wilson's economy and this type of grouping of wholesale activities into a wholesale center should be encouraged. Some of the light industrial type of activities,

which exists at present in the southeastern side of the core area may remain. Some others are expected to move out of the central area. Heavier type industries are also expected to move out of this area. Four blocks between Green and Barnes Streets immediately east of the core area, beyond the railway lines, would require urban renewal measures. The area at present is exclusively occupied by the Negro community and most of the structures in the area are sub-standard.



PROPOSED CENTRAL AREA PLAN

EXISTING BUILDINGS PROPOSED BUILDINGS

0 100 200 400
SCALE - FEET



S K E T C H E S

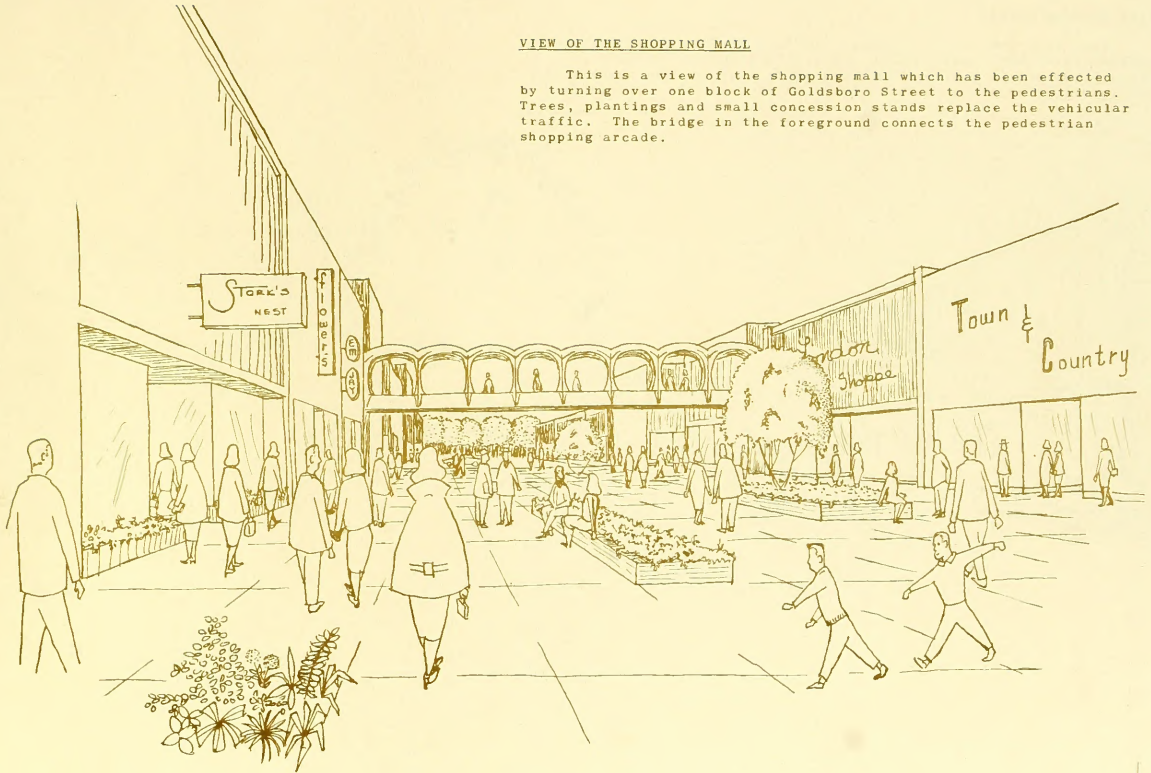
VIEW OF THE PUBLIC SQUARE

Approaching the public square created around the County Court House and the Municipal Building one finds that most of the existing buildings remain. A few possible new ones have been worked into a pleasant setting, which incorporates landscaped features, sitting areas and concession stands.



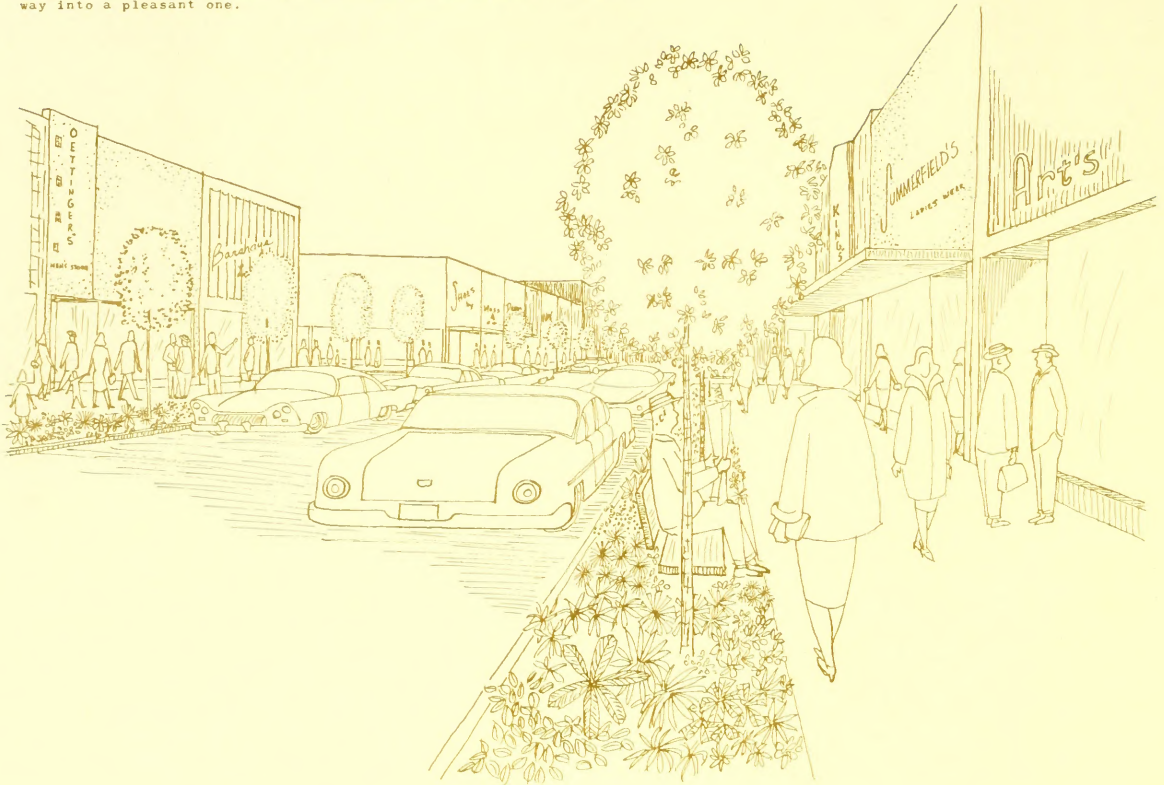
VIEW OF THE SHOPPING MALL

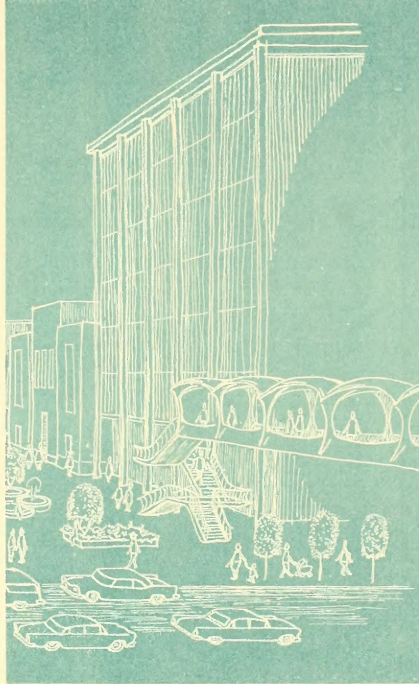
This is a view of the shopping mall which has been effected by turning over one block of Goldsboro Street to the pedestrians. Trees, plantings and small concession stands replace the vehicular traffic. The bridge in the foreground connects the pedestrian shopping arcade.



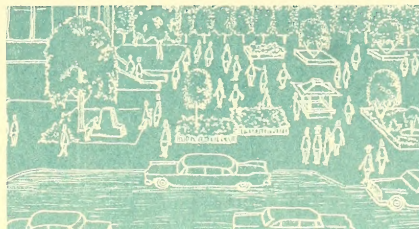
VIEW OF NASH STREET

This is a view of the approach to Nash Street. All on-street parking have been replaced with a strip of planting and sitting areas. The effect has been to transform a drab and monstrous walkway into a pleasant one.





IMPLEMENTATION



IMPLEMENTATION

A "Downtown Development Committee" was formed prior to this study to help investigate the feasibility of the study proposal. The committee consisted mainly of downtown merchants and property owners. One of the first jobs to be handled by this committee was to form several block sub-committees to report on each individual core block, to assist in the preparation of this study. The reports contained informations on the availability and valuation of each piece of property located on each of these blocks. Later, a parking commission was legally established to acquire land for parking as developed in the proposal. These are undoubtedly very encouraging signs. However, much remains to be done, and would depend to a great extent on the initiative taken in future by the people of Wilson.

Central area proposals by their nature demand maximum participation from both private and public sectors, but it stands to reason that the central area merchants and property owners, as well as, the City of Wilson stand to gain most. It is with them, therefore, lie the biggest responsibility to carry forward such a project. There are no clear cut solutions to the division of responsibilities. Different cities have developed their different approaches. However, some observation can be made. Experience in many cities have proven that the responsibilities for the provision of off-street parking should rest on the City. The primary reason for this is the temporary nature of the private parking which is open to business speculation. Such an arrangement could destroy important elements of the plan. Expenditures for rebuilding, creation of pedestrian areas, landscaping etc., on the other hand, could be the responsibility of private enterprise. The responsibility for the proposed public square in the case of Wilson may be with the City of Wilson.

This plan is based on anticipated needs for the City of Wilson which may develop during the following twenty year period. Since, it is not possible to undertake all the improvements which have been proposed immediately, a priority program would have to be established on the basis of availability of properties. However, all such measures

will have to be consistent with the proposals presented, if the stated objectives are to be achieved. Many of the assumptions are based on the available informations. Unanticipated changes in future may necessitate a few changes while retaining the basic concepts of the proposal.

No clear-cut method exists for the implementation of any central area proposal. The people of Wilson will have to develop their own unique approach. Only the basic ideas and concepts are discussed here. The ultimate success of the proposal will depend on the determination and the cooperation of the people of Wilson.

THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Robert L. Stallings, Jr.

Director

DIVISION OF COMMUNITY PLANNING

Robert D. Barbour

Administrator

John Voorhees

Assistant Administrator

Jerry M. Turner

Chief Design Section

PROJECT STAFF

Jayanta Chatterjee

Planner

Richard Moore

Draftsman

Gay Brantley

Cover Design

Glenda Yarbrough

Typist

*G. Barry Lamb

Sketches

*Of the office of
B. Atwood Skinner, Jr.,
Architect

December, 1962

Price: \$1.00

STATE LIBRARY OF NORTH CAROLINA



3 3091 00747 9215

